

Folks:

We examined forests on the "Fish & Game" and "Parks" land in Farragut State Park on 15 May 2003 to examine its present condition and explore any need to log the area. Both during this visit and while previously researching disease and insect activities there and in surrounding forests, we found no major disease or insect problem active. Instead, we found the forests in excellent health and progressing, during time, toward stable, normal successional stages with endemic factors gradually removing some tree species allowing others to replace them. This is both the expected and the preferred status for long-term system functioning and progression. The presence of 200-year-old (+) Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine indicate these species have been present historically and the presence of some western larch and white pine in the Park area imply that this has been a multifaceted and diverse system in the past. Logging to create a less diverse system is inappropriate, particularly as the microorganism component (mainly root-rotting fungi) is now working to gradually increase diversity during extended time provided major disturbance is avoided. There was an indication of past impact in the litter/duff system in that the humus layer was generally inferior to that found in undisturbed or minimally disturbed local forests and the duff layer did not show indications of past intense fire. The litter layer was normal and both it and the duff layer had normal decays and invertebrates present. In summary, all indications provide no compelling reason to log based on macroscopic (overstory and understory) and microcosmal (lichens, fungi, invertebrates, et al) factors present and operating in the area.

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